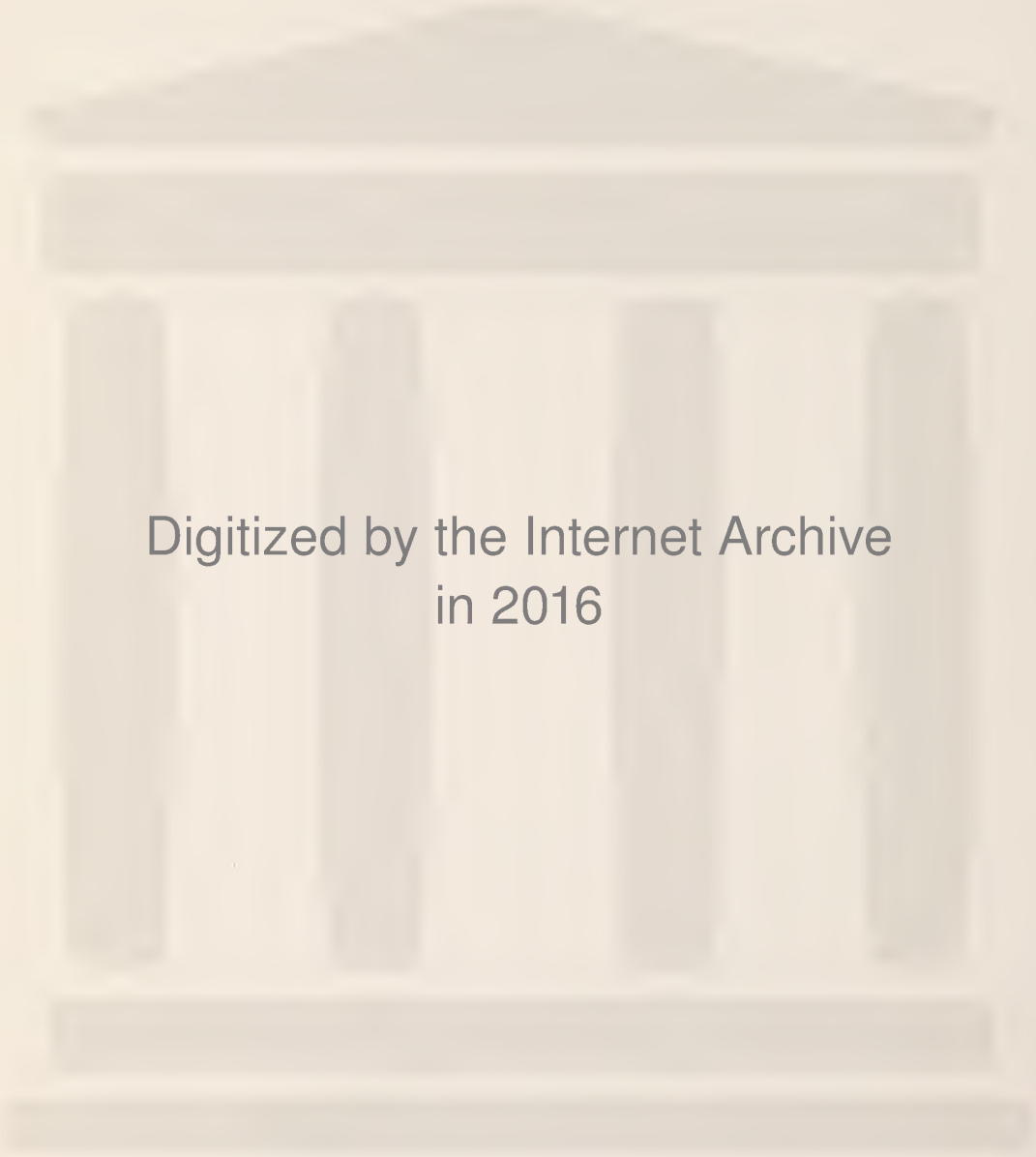

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calvert

Morning

I
So where do we go from here? I mean
after Excedrin and the alarm (General Electric,
Telecron, white with luminous dial). After the eggs
(any style) and coffee, after complying with the whole
"Goodmorninghowareyoulovelydayisn'tit" routine;
what exactly are we going to do? I mean
I know it's shocking but I just don't know.
In this if-then philo-scientific complex, I just don't know.

Imagine:

> "Mr. X (I've forgotten my number) aged twenty-five
> and in good health has actually risen for 9,125
> consecutive days and is still unsure of exactly
> what he is supposed to be doing."

It would make a good headline to read
sometime later. Waiting for a stoplight
in downtown traffic one might catch the bold letters
at the top of a paper passing by:

> UNDECIDED SOUL
> STILL UNDECIDED
> ABOUT MAJOR DECISIONS

You know, it worries me about becoming headline
material; one can be so easily exposed that way
and has no say in the matter or time when it occurs.
So for my part, I thought I'd better get to you
before the Times, before the 7 A.M. Early News,
before I am exposed for being what I am:
still undecided.

II
Well, now that I feel a bit safer (since I
got my "position paper" out before the News)
I want to get back to what my title implies
(titles work that way you know) and give you
the song--at least the words of it. They go:

song

I have a place
four feet by ten
a sacred space
from which I can,
if I choose,
be poetic.

For I pay my rent
and am even free,
to a certain extent,
this liberty
of speaking;
so listen.

My patio's the square
of which I speak.
And with great care
about once a week
I stand on it;
they let me.

And I've noticed that you
amid complex refinement
have a like space too
for escaping confinement.
So I bid you:
Good morning.

III
And so through poetic trickery I have got
you where I want you. On my patio: morning,
7 A.M. and already warm as hell. The concrete jungle
is either asleep or gone off to work. It is quiet.
God, I can't even hear the birds anymore;
that is, they are no longer here. There were two birds
that stayed by the swimming pool; they had a nest
lodged under the diving board support--
but that was last winter. Now the board is occupied
by less interesting tenants and I have lost track
of the birds. They left the other night, or month--
I'm not sure. But I know I heard them
flapping, flying, over the complex, leaving;
knowing that their season had gone. That is why
we stand here now, on the patio singing
what snatches we can remember
of their morning song.

—bob wickless

harold lalos

A quick bite and a blues guitar

You
leaving me an aftertaste
of sardines,
I must savor the taint of tin with the silver,

you drag a lick
across the steel guitar,
slide the bar up the
whining strings that touch sour against my tongue.
Never holding down one note,
but bending through silvered tones,
the run resolves in implications
you leave
to ricochet
inside the hollow body

as you stretch sweetness
from our strings
in raw open tuning.

—marianne laroche

Tip softly by the sleeping child

tip softly by the sleeping child.
stir him to and not dissolve
his dream,
for that we must but wait the while.
—hugh michael brown (from original poem)

at nine o'clock
we always send the children climbing:
"up the stairs and into bed."
we say in mommy and daddy big voices,
and feeling better
settle down with the paper,
and evening.

and we must caution our older sons,
and daughters,
"tip softly," we must tell them,
"the child is sleeping,
the child is dreaming into-the-muddle-
big-people-bepuddled-out-of-the-fuddle dreams,
and though we don't understand
we must respect the commanding speck
of the childish world."

"tip softly," i heard sometimes my mother
tell my brother (once but firm) in the days when i was young.
"our little boy is weaving sponge webs
and wringing us out, but no matter—don't pout."
and my big brother replying
must have said something like "protect"
or was it then "defect"
that was the word?

i can never know;
for the child now sleeping and his legion
fall to my hands:
i must hold and keep the watch.

—hugh michael brown

jamie betz

Duck
pond

I
around this manmade cradle
or crucible of weed stone and fish
the drakes are
gabbling after the ducks
chasing up
their white skirts
to lay in their
forgetful amphibious
web in web way.
Pedestrian waterlogged
they stagger from the water
to their public house
like a flock of proud sots
fluent with each
other and their faithful fowl scent
is this what is meant
by their water gossip
that slips from bank to bank?
To be more god than most
phyla friends and flowers
is to hang your bell anywhere
and roost
without thought without care
Though some always run away
from thunder or fire
or stray household cats
others always shun
the four scunkscented devildark corners
in this official
duck park.
Though some shall hail
the rain in preludes
of running piano hammers
others shall say:
windy and circular it
collects in mirrors
always and same
since the deluge went its way

II
Is this the way
hardbitten realists and
levitators alike
hold hard the world
to spark and stone?
By daylight
the ducks scour the earth
for locust for a mythic spot
of honey
like those constant men
with their dowser sticks
tapping and tapping again
on empty desert floors.
by night
they collect in the common fold
or covey
without the least fuss
like small white bones
or small white ghosts
in this manmade cradle
or crucible
Is this the way
the world is held hard
to spark and stone?

—joel arsenault

Them grey boys
sure do think
they smart

But I know better.

They don't know how good
it feels
to do your number
down at the Crystal.

They only show blank
pasty faces
when we wrinkle our
dark ones
with laughter about

C.P. Time.

The kind ones
show us their pity,
never guessing how
when closeted together
we reassemble it
as pity for their lost
SOUL.

One of them
jive-ass mothers
asked me
"How does it feel to be black?"

paul levin

To be black is
to feel.
An it sho do feel good
to me.

—katheryn davenport

Sometimes when you know I'm there
You let me in
And for that short while,
We wander the lonely roads together
Until you catch your breath and turn on me:
Some dark, medieval suspicion, some Adam-born suspicion:
Never Bare One's Soul to Woman

For your dreams are like "tomorrow"—
When the children, not understanding Time as yet, ask,
"Momma, is it 'tomorrow' now?"
You've long since learned never to believe
What Momma said.

—natalie gawdiak

fitzgerald

Poeta nascitur

Whose doing
        was my coming
        here?
Did some Venetian gondoleer
pole and float me
down that ancient canal? Or
Did some warlock
wrench me out of the maw
like a tourist pulling bonbons
out of a paper sack?
                Or
was the bristling through truly
(what a pinkwillowy swan
was that dawn)
        as easy as eggs in
        an eggwoman's basket
        as graceful?

Or was it even steven
stung and stinging
did we like a mob
of nettles bump
onto shore jolting
into
some wild bad aftermath

—joel arsenault

bokr

Circles

by michael dolan

jay-boy was down. the snow numbers had dealt him was cut, mostly powdered milk, and he could feel the milk inside, messing up his mind. spent the whole goddam day inanouta buses, looking for a score, and now numbers had burned him. kill that motherfucker if i catch his ass, just before what smack there was in the hit got down, and jay-boy went into his nod. woke up with crystal in his eyes, rubrubbin to get the sleep out, and picked up his works. needle lookin bad, better cop another. hit mom's dresser for a dime to score with, and phoned julie.

julie.
jay-boy. what's up?
just came down an i need a hit. got any?
not on the phone, stupid. come on over an ill see what i can do.

walked out of the house, careful not to leave his works out on top of the sink, and turned left to make it to julie's. if i was straight, i could dig the sun more (thought jay-boy) but junkies dig the night, an i'm a stone junkie. julie's place hmmmmmmmm, yeah, thats where i'm goin.

jay-boy.
julie.
well, you lookin to score, or what?
yeah, watcha got?
well (drawing it out so jay-boy would know this was not an ordinary deal) smack's real tight this week.....
but i NEED it! (jay-boy shivering already)
well, i got lotsa nice strawberry mesc an some really nice acid, whyncha try that, make ya forget youre a junkie for a while. give it to ya for nothin, cause we're such good friends. here. (jay-boy gulping it down like a thirsty guy drinking water)
how long a trip's this shit good for, anyway?
ohhh, twelve, thirteen hours...
great. see ya.

walked for a while, thinkin how long it'd been since he'd tripped, and tryin hard to notice when he started to get off. tryin to remember the last time he'd thought much at all. sun wasn't different yet, but he feel it creepin in a little now. everything startin to blur, like the blurrr you get into when you're doin long updown sets. movin a little fasssssttter now, gettin off a littllle bit. now he could remember the last time he'd tripped, feelin powerful, on top of everything, then he'd crash an it'd all collapse inside his brain. now it was movin reeaaallly fast, colors movin brighter, got to get back to the house, lay back an dig some sounds. tommy, yeah, he could dig the who, trippin.

aaahhhhhh it almost h u r t s to think, goin round faster an faster, even worse when his eyes are closed updown updown floatin townshend breakin it up DWWWAAAANNNNNGGGG lay down on the bed an dig it now, just like last trip, i'll never shoot up again, this is too fuckin much, tryin to think what it used to be like when he was a kid, no drugs, no excitement now he could rruuuullllle the world never shoot up again even though i know i will...wow, the who jumpin up an down THUD
whats that, who's there...

"It's just me, Johnny-boy! Happy Birthday! Come on down and take a ride on the present Daddy got you; it's in the rec room! Hurry up now, dinner's already on the table!"

For Reed Whittemore

I imagine that you used to move
eight to twelve miles per hour
like a gentle wind.

And now as the words come easier
than the handling of the pen
and not the congratulations
but the shaking of hands
shakes you.

You must imagine
some interfering moment
of a cigarette rolling off the tray
of books falling from the case
covering the place
with new and selected poems.
A muscle twitch. You release your breath.
Who knows where the wind goes?

You lift the cup with both hands.

—nancy marks

New England footprints

Thoreau, shoeless, was no old schemer.
No Hawthorne with black shoes,
Cold black like Puritan muslin.
No Melville with muddy boots,
So heavy they sank
Into soil; buried for years.
No Emerson with loose, polished shoes,
Shoes whose neat shine reflected
The image of everything.
Thoreau was never old at all.
With bare feet he bumped against the earth
And truth, like grass, slid between his toes.

—susan feldman

larry higgins

Free enterprise, democracy's grandmother

you know how men sometimes measure themselves?
well it's the same way with your grandmothers:
when they are young and screwing up their coattails,
they box your grandfathers into four corners
and sail them out the door
to the stock market:
(grandfathers meet there in supposed secrecy)
but all the while grannies are home snickering madly.

but don't think they don't cheer their young men
with warm "make-money" smiles. they pass it through the phone
lines until they are old.
and five o'clock some day
or whenever wall street decides to collapse for the night
your grandfathers come slinking home
to sleep on the rug like the cat.

you think grandmothers like roses.
you think they make apple pies
shaped like hearts and flowers,
and Thanksgiving belongs to them
although they sometimes concede Christmas to your mother.
you'd never think of granny
being your mother's escape hatch
or the cause of your father undoing his pants in public.

you think they like roses.
but they like telling dirty jokes,
like bedtime stories with a twist,
to throw you off.

little boys, know your grandmothers.

—hugh michael brown

steve budman

1310 vermont avenue

At 1310 Vermont Avenue in Washington, D.C., in the afternoon, a group of high school students giggle, jive, do funny, interact, learn, be sensitive, create.

Their art is big, bold, intense and sometimes abandoned frequently for another scope of the imagination. The art, like the mind, is expanding, vivid, sometimes complicated, trying very hard to be personal and honest.

Their poetry is very personal, vague, groping, confused, overly sad, deliriously happy and sensitive to the harsh world they live in. Growing. Straining for happiness. Awkwardly aware of surrounding lies and shams.

These students joined this literary-art program because regular classes were boring, unchallenging, restricting. At 1310, they're free to...

giggle
learn
jive
be sensitive
create
do funny.

—carolyn a jones
editor

photography by
steve budman

Inside out I'm you

My thoughts be come
entangled in a web
of love.
Visions of an image
cover my mind
And I see you
my vision
all through the day,
my mind is in a state
of confusion.
Night comes and I
dream all my dreams
of you.
And when I see you
inside me-
inside out I'm you.

—lasharn tucker

Winning is the best part of
the game.
Losing the shame.
Proud, head high,
you walk with full confidence.
You're on top.
You climb
the rope cuts your hands, as you
pull, the rope seems to have no end, but
you keep going
the game is almost over.
You're relieved to find you're ahead
and so close to the top
you stop.
Think.
Smile.
Slide back.
Then start
all over
again.

—lasharn tucker

Orange
a taste upon my
lips.
a sting
a piece of peel
orange
creamy, thick cold
a dream come true
It comes in a tall
paper cup.
filled to the top
when it's purchased.
I push by straw through
the lid and begin to suck.
My day is complete
I've tasted my first
McDonald's orange
milk shake.

—lasharn tucker

Sitting here on the side of Hainespoint Bridge
I find myself gazing at the river below
and trying hard to imagine how it
must have been...
how it must have looked
and smelt,
without all the garbage
and trash...and debris...

and suddenly I feel like crying
because
I see the whole world
like a reflection
in this polluted river.

—jacqueline barnes

I have no home...only the many parks
in this country
and no food but what is left for me to find in the trash...
or what I can steal.
...my clothes are not warm enough,
but must provide.
and I musn't complain,
for I have no one to turn to
...no one to really care, that I exist.
and yet
I DO exist.

...You may see me any day now,
sitting in Your park,
my head bent low, or my eyes...a vacant stare.
and you will quickly move away from me
or turn your head, and refuse to see
that I Am
...That I exist.

...and yes, when strangers meet our illusion of a country,
...a country that castrated me...
as a man,
then, on my weak knees I will stand tall.
and with my last strength...if it be...
my last breath, I will say
with all my heart—

"See me for what I Am
...for I too, am America."

—jacqueline harnes

...Whenever I want to feel happy, I find someplace where I can look at the sky while lying on my back, or look at leaves, something like that. I mentally divorce myself from society, prohably a necessary social function, but that's all right.

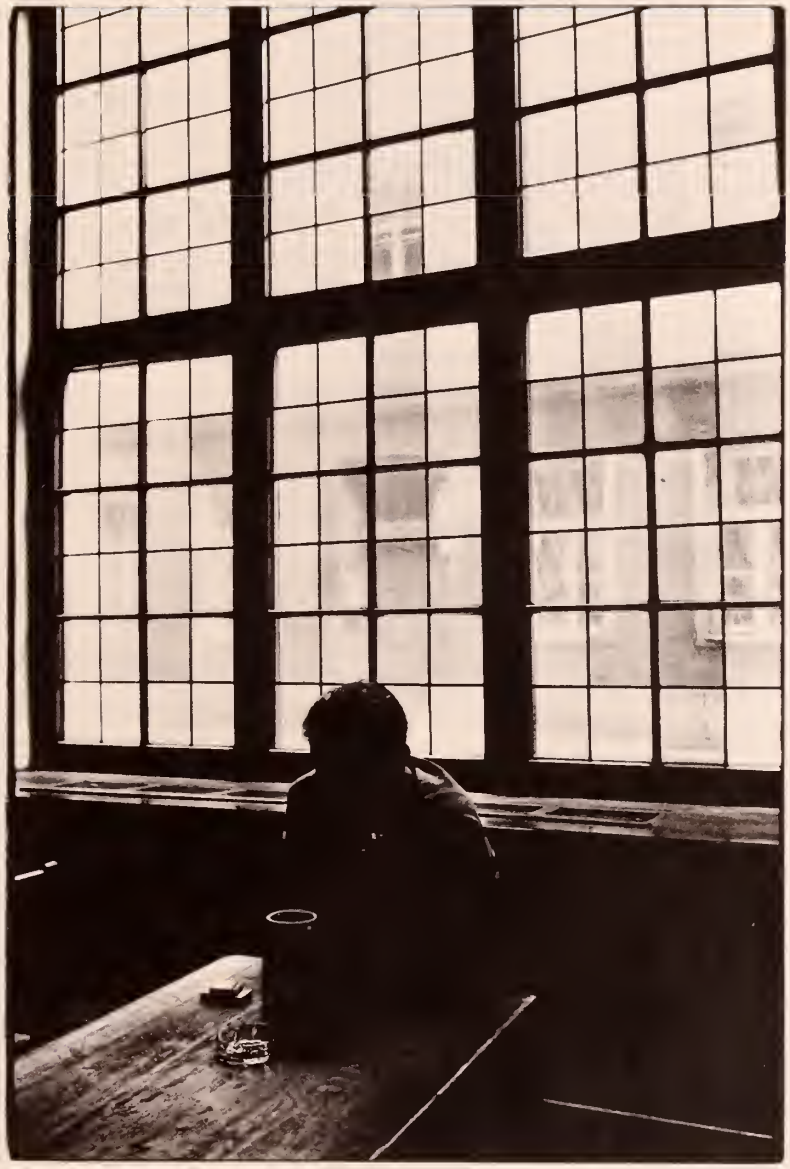
Finally, to be honest (as Baldwin would have it) I don't really know much what I'm talking about.

—bill cooksy

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

WHAT WE GOING TO DO WITH IT ?

larry higgins



steve budman

The hunt

Long before the sun proved morning
the hunt began
Four men and seven dogs
against a rusty fox
convicted from a handful
of bloodstained feathers.

Eleven circled upwind in the morning
one in revenge
to put an end to murder
by another death

By noon they'd seen him twice.
The dogs had run him to the ground
and lost him
to the waist-high summer grass
were cursed and beaten
and sent on

The fox kept just
ahead and to the left
waiting only to hear
from which direction
his conviction came
and then moved on
and felt the summer moving with him
into night

The sun grew weaker
Eleven shadows longer
the hills a little steeper

Sometime just before dark
the dogs cornered the fox
against a rock
just one sprang at him
neatly broke his neck
and left him lying there
no blood
just limp

Four men
watched seven dogs
slink down the empty hill
and return home
to lie beneath unpainted porches
blending in the dust
unchained

Next to the rusted water trough
the next morning
they found the feathers smeared with blood
four men and six dogs found them.

—carin woerheide

caval

Atonement

The old Jew holed up in my cellar
sent the children back upstairs with:
"He says these are the Sabbatical years."
"That's not good enough," I said. "We have
these matters, and I'm indisposed to that excuse."
"Oh father, later for this. We've been waiting
all morning for the cocoa. He says He's not
making it anymore, so why don't you do it now."

I could imagine him strolling that dug out room
in the aimless fashion he took on whenever
he became distraught or drunk off the wine we
sometimes shared. He was not a good drinker.
Yes...His cane out before him, useless, never
even touching the floor and his back typically
hunched but more so now. The yarmelka fastened
to his hair with bobby pins (I sometimes laughed
at that. He would scowl back.) and his tweed coat
tied about him with old rope. All this, as if
dependent on the white, jutted beard that must
have more worth than a stick in hand.

"Father, the cocoa! Please." They were all pleading,
each in turn. "Not now. I'm going to see him."
His hovel was everywhere black with nothing astir.
"It's all right. You can stay another month...
As long as you like. He's probably dead," I muttered
just loud enough for anyone there to hear. I hoped it
would frighten him. But this was wasted, for he had
taken the advantage of the dark. He had made it and knew
what could best be done with it. The first thing I saw
was two quick jabs of black, as if the darkness was
beginning to writhe within itself. Then, towards the
ceiling a few reflections of what looked like starshine
through a skylight. A step then, another, only two when
out from that cellar came his form ripped or divided down
his whole being, vertically torn apart and wide open,
coming for me with his arms leading up to the ceiling,
to the stick he held high above himself with at least
the potential to practice a kind of violence on me.

—john picard

paul levin

Imagine a voice with the music
of a zoo before a hurricane,
multiply by two—
I think that's my Muse.

She wears tight shorts in West Virginia,
chews gum and goes to Beauty School;
in a year she'll live in a city someplace,
fixing nice people's hair.

At Keyser Senior High she took commercial credits,
and learned to screw outdoors
(sometimes after football games)
with her feet planted firmly in the air.

Unlike Portnoy's Monkey, she spites;
and I therefore writes...

—bill poling

Pinned to blood-rust barbs,
A rabbit screams against an
Implacable sky.

—melanie anderson

chuang

Because I read so much of the day
and go south in winter

1
Foraminiforans, hole-bearers of the sea,
Never pause in their fall toward gaps.
Currents lace through their latticework,
Tugging this way and that like recurrent dreams.

I stand by the ribs of a beached galleon.
By comparing our heights in summer, I understand
The press of the Maine winter upon sand.
So little of the wreck remains exposed,
And I have a sinking feeling that it is.

Bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh

2
Who is that third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look away,
I am looking for a way
To understand by the sleep creases in your waking face
How you gape at the night. Nights that work their way
Into the gaps between the bedcovers.

So little remains exposed.

—nancy marks

The late great...

by harlan weikle

Quite simply, Benjamin T. Atwood was the most important man in the world. To be sure, he was not listed in *Who's Who;* his politics, his religion were hardly influential. In fact, he did not do anything that (in his opinion) seemed likely to have some future, profound significance. It was simply and quietly true that Benjamin T. Atwood was the most important man in the world.

Benjamin's awareness of this singularly unremarked facet of his existence was rooted deep in the events and memory of his past. Like a glittering long chain, Ben's life and good luck stretched from childhood to the present and conceivably well into the future. He was lucky, he knew it and he acted accordingly. He lived by intuition and thereby prospered; secure in the knowledge that his lot was somehow central to the machinations of the universe.

Of course, Ben had not always been aware of his private estate of good fortune. It was first revealed to him at the end of his ninth year on earth. He had been walking home from PS 14 in Shreaveport, Connecticut when the excited voice of his best friend shattered the afternoon stillness.

"Hey Ben! Ben wait up, will ya? They got your name. Ya hear! Pulled it rightouta the hat. Ya won."

Ben stopped to stare at his friend shouting and skipping down the street after him. "Won what?" he said.

"All that ice cream," came the reply. "Ya really won! Now com'on, they're lookin' for ya."

It was quite true. Ben had won a contest that if the truth were known, he had not even entered. It was a natural coincidence. It seemed that Hugh Crawford, the best enemy Ben had ever had, had inadvertently deposited a spitwad in the contest bowl at Kliester's Drug. The semi-lethal missle had been prepared in advance and, after the meticulous fashion of young warriors, it came complete with the name, rank and serial number of the intended victim. The wad won $10 worth of ice cream sodas and, within the ensuing week, a score of new friends for Ben.

Winning such a contest is the sort of thing that might happen to any one of us, and we would as easily pass it off as a fluke, but not Ben. To Ben it was a clear pronouncement of Divine intervention, both terrible and fine. It filled him with an excitement and wonder, and pointed the way to an ever increasing spiral of expectation.

Benjamin often recalled that early triumph with the clarity and relish we so jealously reserve for our childhood memories. Today was no exception. The sun shone jewel-like from the hood of his grey sedan as he drove east toward the central promontory of mid-Manhattan office buildings. Traffic was unusually heavy and noisy this morning but Ben remained unperturbed. The traffic light changed from amber to red and Ben allowed his thoughts to drift.

Childish memories gave way to those of young adulthood. Ben was eighteen, a senior in high school and a rather minor outfielder for the St. Johns' baseball team. His position was constantly threatened by the mediocrity of his performance. However, he was a senior and no one seemed willing to accept the responsibility for dropping him from the squad.

As it happened, the season of Ben's senior year was a particularly glorious one for the St. Johns' team. With an unprecedented 7 and 2 record, St. Johns approached its first Catholic league championship with bounding confidence.

That September night was brisk, he recalled, and the crowd squirmed in agony over the 7 to 6 score in the bottom of the ninth inning. Ben was at bat with a count of 3 and 2. As the pitcher mounted the apex of his delivery all motion within the stadium held. The stands hushed and then the ball came. It rolled high and fast, like some giant planet reeling through the heavens. It hurtled toward the plate, obedient to one law and intent upon one command, and Ben swung. The ball caught momentarily in the limbo of action and reaction as wood struck leather and there was a definite clap of thunder over a thousand ears and a thousand smiles.

Ben's swing had been purposeful, the contact measured and precise. The ball arched high and proceeded to leave the stadium as if in answer to some heavenly summons. Indeed, the ball never was found; Ben was.

At least four talent scouts would later swear that they had never seen a match for Ben's batting prowess. Perhaps they were right but for all the wrong reasons. Ben was not a good batter, just a terribly

lucky one.

The most important man on earth broke off his reverie and smiled at the sudden appearance of a parking space immediately ahead and directly in front of the entrance to his building. This sort of thing happened regularly to Ben as though someone had anticipated his arrival and managed to clear the way just in time.

Ben parked the car and was quickly inside the building. Outside the sun shone warm in October and God seemed surely in His heaven.

After graduation Ben was signed, sealed and delivered to a Florida farm team. His professional rise was meteoric. A half season and thirty-five home runs later, Ben, at nineteen, became the youngest big gun in the major leagues. He still could not run, catch or throw a ball, but a pitch rarely escaped his bat.

By the time he was twenty-five Ben was a baseball legend, wealthy, a household word; by all measures he was the successful young man. He considered himself very lucky indeed, and then his intuition began to spark.

Within a few months Ben had abandoned baseball and accepted the somewhat nebulous position as head of product control for Skogman, Skogman and Carlson, investment brokers on the New York stock exchange. To be sure, their only product was money, and Ben knew little enough about that; however, SS and C was definitely *the* company. They paid lavishly for heroes, baseball or otherwise, to both adorn and be adored by the American public. Ben's timing, as usual, was exquisite. Within a week of his athletic retirement the owner of his club was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on sixteen counts of income tax fraud. Baseball commissioner Vance Land demanded an immediate disenfranchisement of the club. The entire team was sold to S. Hisouchi who is currently wowing exhibition crowds the length and breadth of the Japanese islands. Again Ben felt lucky, very, very lucky.

His good fortune thus perpetuated, his wealth doubled and then doubled again. It soon became apparent that if baseball had been kind to Benjamin T. Atwood, the business world was downright generous. A new promotion would appear over the horizon and Ben's nearest competitor would invariably suffer a heart attack. Ben was lucky not as the exception but as the rule, and of course everyone agreed that Ben was headed for great things.

Ben's philosophy hardened. He grew increasingly covetous, though never suspicious of his great good fortune. He tried to rationalize events, tell himself that men made their own luck, but all along he knew how absurd that ancient homily really was. His luck, he concluded, was preordained, a purely physical extension of a cosmic truth.

For a few years Ben dabbled in astrology. He explored the charts and minds of countless authorities; mathematicians, astrologers and reputed seers of varying degrees of authenticity. However, the end was always the same. The theories, stretched and bent, so often wholly prostituted, were seldom revealing. In the end, Ben dropped his inquiry. He continued to prosper. He lived with absolute confidence. Life never crossed him. He knew without hesitation and unashamedly that his was a charmed existence. He was a separate entity; a being somehow charged with a profound destiny. He was more than a speck of mortal dust adrift in an infinite universe, uncared for and uncaring. He felt absorbed by predestination; the central pivot around which the entire universal motion wheeled. He was the planet rushing headlong toward...toward what?

That afternoon when Benjamin returned to his car the sun was high and New York basked in the warm pleasantness of Indian summer. Traffic was still heavy but it had not the hustle and scurry of the morning rush hour. All heaven shone with the presence of God and everything was right with the world.

Benjamin eased his sedan away from the curb and accelerated slowly around the corner toward River highway and home.

The collision was awesome. The heavy transport rolled easily over the car and came to rest, its bulk hanging grotesquely, all four axles suspended by the ruined pulp of the grey sedan. Benjamin died instantly.

A few yards away a small red Volkswagen rested snugly against the curb. The most important man in the world sat behind the wheel, somewhat stunned by the appearance of so fine a parking space. He watched as a police car flashed to a halt near the accident. He felt sorry for the driver. It was almost as though the grey sedan had been reserving this space for him. Besides, what could he do. He felt lucky, very lucky indeed.

larry higgins

Deer dream

They come,
as rumors
in the haze
of toads' eyes
and pools,
long-necked
breathing
their flesh
into the flesh
of moss

over cow bones'
long abandoned pastures
they stoop, tasting
glow of phosphorous,
mounting and
being mounted
in the remnant light.

Have i dreamed
their shadows'
white-bellied
rising, or
the passing
of a dream?

Into unborn
silences
trees lean, tumbling
night hawks
crying red-boned cries,
dragging shadows down,
knocking brambles
into the dust.

—susan sonde

harold lalos

Charges of "atrocities to political prisoners" were countered by noting the equally atrocious American penal institutions. "Before we look at them, we should look at our own dirty underwear," he said.

I left the mall,
and found a room,
and pulled down my underpants,
and looked,
and sure enough

—jeffrey shulman

The football players

Awkward as amphibians the first time ashore—
They find it hard to rise
From their knees, from their all-fours—
With cleat-hands, they waddle sideways
On the land—they need
To rise and run, they would
Fly, they try
To stand,
They fall—
They find it hard
To rise.
The coach is watching from the side
And does not interfere with each play.
Godlike, he knows that they must fall.
And from the stands thousands
Of would-be runners, a sea of eyes,
Fishes in the tide, yearning for the land—
They too would leap and fly,
They too would stand.

—natalie gawdiak

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